

Message Text

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SETAF VICENZA
CAMP DARBY LIVORNO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MILI, IT
SUBJECT: CAMP DARBY CONSTRUCTION: PRESSBRIEFING

REF: FLORENCE 0155

1. AS FOLLOW-UP TO MARCH 9 VISIT TO CAMP DARBY ORGANIZED FOR PRESIDENT OF TUSCANY REGION AND TWO ALDERMEN (REFTEL), BPAO LAGAMMA ACCOMPANIED THREE LOCAL JOURNALISTS TO CAMP DARBY ON VISIT WHICH RESULTED IN PRESS COVERAGE HELPFUL IN CORRECTING DISTORTIONS AND OUTRIGHT FALSEHOODS IN PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS REGARDING CAMP DARBY'S PROPOSAL TO MODERNIZE ITS DOCKING FACILITIES.

2. FOR THE VISIT POST SELECTED "LA NAZIONE" CORRESPONDENT RICCARDO BERTI AND GIULIANO FONTANI FROM LIVORNO DAILY "IL TERRENO". SINCE WE BELIEVE THAT IT ABOVE ALL IMPORTANT TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT AMONG THOSE WHO LIVE IN AREA AND HENCE AFFECT DECISIONS AND THE CLIMATE IN WHICH CAMP DARBY OPERATES, FOCUS WAS PLACED ON LOCAL PRESS FOR INITIAL VISIT. ALSO INCLUDED WAS FLORENCE ANSA BUREAU CHIEF DANTE NOCENTINI.

3. ALL THREE JOURNALISTS WERE TREATED TO HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL
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BRIEFING ON ROLE OF CAMP DARBY AND ITS OPERATIONS CONDUCTED BY BASE COMMANDER COLONEL FORD AND HIS STAFF WHO WERE ABLY AIDED BY ITALIAN LIAISON OFFICER COLONEL PELLEGRINI. BRIEFING WAS FOLLOWED BY ON SITE INSPECTION OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AREA, TOGETHER WITH OTHER RELEVANT AREAS OF BASE.

4. ADROIT HANDLING OF NEWSMEN COMBINED WITH CANDOR RESULTED

IN SUBSEQUENT POSITIVE PRESS COVERAGE (PROMINENT STORIES IN BOTH "NAZIONE" AND "TIRRENO" AND FORTY LINE ANSA SERVICE). REPORTING CORRECTED A NUMBER OF MISINTERPRETATIONS NAMELY:

(A) CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS REPORTS CAMP DARBY HAS NOT JUMPED THE GUN AND BEGUN CONSTRUCTION WITHOUT NECESSARY GOI APPROVAL.

(B) BASE WILL CONTINUE TO RELY ON ITALIAN LABOR AND PORT FACILITIES FOR ITS OPERATIONS.

(C) MAIN REASON FOR CONSTRUCTION IS TO ALLOW LOGISTICS BASE TO OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY, EFFECTIVELY AND SAFELY WITHOUT IMPEDING TRAFFIC ON EXISTING CANAL.

(D) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PROJECT WILL BE RELATIVELY MINOR AND BASE FOR SOME TIME HAS ENGAGED IN AMBITIOUS REFORESTATION PROJECT.

(E) STRESS WAS PLACED ON ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON MATTER OF DOCK CONSTRUCTION.

5. MAIN POINT STRESSED IN REPORTS WAS THAT PROJECT EMPHATICALLY NOT INTENDED TO MASK IMPORTATION OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS INTO AREA. ALTHOUGH WE WERE UNDER U.S. POLICY CONSTRAINT NOT TO ISSUE DIRECT DENIAL, WE SUCCEEDED IN DEMONSTRATING UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS REGARDING NUCLEAR MATERIALS WERE BASED ON FLIMSIEST SPECULATION WHICH WAS QUOTE WITHOUT FOUNDATION UNQUOTE. NEWSMEN TOOK THIS TO BE CATEGORIC DENIAL AND SO IN PROCESS MISQUOTED COLONEL FORD. WHILE THE SUBTLETY MAY HAVE BEEN MISSED, BELIEVE THE NET EFFECT WAS TO SOOTHE A PERTURBED LOCAL CITIZENRY.
GORDON

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